



TESTIMONY
of the
CONNECTICUT CONFERENCE OF MUNICIPALITIES
to the
JUDICIARY COMMITTEE
April 8, 2011

CCM is Connecticut's statewide association of towns and cities and the voice of local government - your partners in governing Connecticut. Our members represent almost 90% of Connecticut's population. We appreciate this opportunity to provide testimony to you on issues of concern to towns and cities.

CCM opposes Raised Bill 1234 "AAC Nondisclosure of Residential Addresses of Certain Public Officials and Employees."

While CCM understand the genesis behind this bill - which would mandate that no public agency may disclose the residential address of a host of enumerated individuals - the reality of its application is impossible -*AND*- extremely time-consuming and thus costly for what could be accomplished.

There are a number of flaws in the concept:

- First and foremost, without any official notification, there is no way for a public agency to know that a certain individual falls within this "protected" status.
- Public agencies have no idea what addresses constitute a residential, business, or secondary home address - without any official notification.
- Passage of these various FOI exemption bills over the years has only served to provide a false sense of security to these individuals. There are many "public" records from which names and addresses simply CANNOT be removed - voter registration, land deeds, tax records, dog licenses, and vital records to name only a few. Not to mention that a mere search of the internet will readily disclose such information to any interested party.
- Liability for public agencies increases with passage of such a bill due to the fact that some records simply cannot be altered. The alteration of land records would compromise real estate transactions, title searches, collection of debts, and affect the ability to notify

adjoining land owners as now mandated by state statute for certain planning and zoning issues.

- The **integrity of public records would be compromised and render them unreliable** for current and historical data purposes if redactions of various names and addresses were done to them.
- There is currently a **pending court case that was just heard by the Connecticut Supreme Court**, challenging the withholding of certain public information. A decision is expected sometime this year.

In closing, there are a number of steps that individuals can take to protect their identity and safeguard their personal information that would not include placing a costly mandate and impossible on public agencies. Lastly, acting on expanding a law that is currently being challenged in and examined by our state's highest court is premature and not prudent.

CCM urges the committee to **take no action** on this bill.

##

If you have any questions, please contact Kachina Walsh-Weaver, Senior Legislative Associate of CCM via email kweaver@ccm-ct.org or via phone (203) 498-3026.